



MIDEWIN NATIONAL TALLGRASS PRAIRIE SUMMER JOBS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

The Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) is a summer employment program for young men and women ages 15 through 18, who work, learn, and earn together by doing projects on public land. The goals are to accomplish needed conservation work on public lands, to provide gainful employment for America's youth, and provide an opportunity for participants to develop an understanding and appreciation for the nation's natural environment and heritage.

The Forest Service is now accepting applications for the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) program at the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. To be eligible for the YCC program at Midewin, applicants must:

- Be between the ages of 15 and 18, and enrolled in school.
- Be a permanent resident of the United States, its territories or possessions.
- Be able to demonstrate the ability to perform certain outside tasks.
- Be able to get to and from the Midewin headquarters located 4 miles north of Wilmington on Illinois Highway 53.
- Possess a Social Security card and have a work permit (if required) prior to the first working day of the YCC program (June 6th, 2011).
- Have a bank account for automatic deposit of paychecks.
- Have no history of serious criminal or other anti-social behavior that might jeopardize their safety or that of others.

- Have the consent and permission of a parent or legal guardian to apply.

The Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie will host a parent orientation mid-May. The program will begin on Monday, June 6th and run for eight weeks ending on Friday, July 29th. Participants will work 40 hours a week and be paid the prevailing minimum wage, currently \$8.25 per hour.

To be considered for this program, your application and teacher recommendation letter MUST be received in the Midewin office by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, April 1st. Top candidates, selected based on the quality of their application and letter of recommendation, will go on to receive interviews. Students will be notified by Friday April 29th. Nonselected applicants will be held on file in the event a vacancy should occur prior to start up of the program on Monday, June 6th.

This will be the 15th year for the YCC program at Midewin. In past years, the YCC crew has helped plant and maintain the native plant nursery, enhance grassland bird habitat, construct fence needed to manage livestock grazing, construct trails, and assist with an archeological dig. A portion of each work week is spent in educational activities. These include field trips to nearby natural areas and historic sites, and assisting resource professionals with various research activities. Participants are paid for the time spent in educational activities.

Additional information may be obtained by contacting Jamie Hutter at (815) 423-6370 or jlhutter@fs.fed.us.

WHAT IS THE MIDEWIN NATIONAL TALLGRASS PRAIRIE?

♦ The Joliet Army Ammunition Plant was a 23,500-acre site where TNT was once produced for the U.S. Army. Today, 19,000 acres of the former arsenal are the largest piece of protected open space in northeastern Illinois and the first national tallgrass prairie in the United States.

♦ The Illinois Land Conservation Act was signed into law in 1996 and established the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie on the former Joliet Army Ammunition Plant. The law also established the adjoining Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, the Deer Run and Island City industrial parks, and a county landfill.

♦ Midewin is administered by the USDA Forest Service, in close cooperation with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the support of hundreds of volunteers and partner agencies, businesses, and organizations.

♦ Public access to Midewin continues to be restricted because of the Army's ongoing cleanup of contaminated areas. Nearly 30 miles of permanent and interim hiking, biking and horseback riding trails are currently available, and a schedule of escorted tours and other interpretive

opportunities is can be on Midewin's website at www.fs.fed.us/mntp/.

♦ What can you see today at Midewin? First of all, a Welcome Center offers interpretive exhibits and a bookstore on State Route 53 just north of Wilmington. Directly across the highway, one of the first prairie restoration projects is underway and you may see groups of volunteers planting prairie seedlings and shrubs. Midewin's native seed production garden is located just east of I-55 and north of New River Road. Volunteers and Midewin staff spend many hours tending the long beds of 70 prairie plant species that have been planted there.

♦ Midewin is also home to a national elite firefighting team and the first ever in the Midwest, the Midewin Interagency Hotshot Crew. Hotshot crews are professional wildland fire suppression teams specifically trained, organized, and equipped for rapid response to wildfire and other emergencies anywhere in North America.

